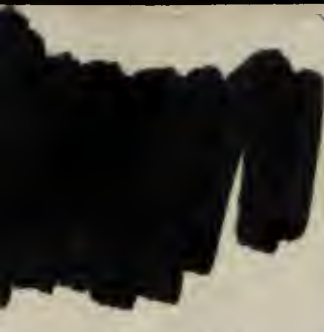


INDIANA VILLAGE NEW HARMONY

Gc
977.202
N352H0



ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02516 4846

Gc 977.202 N352H0

HOLLIDAY, JOHN H. 1846-1921.

AN INDIANA VILLAGE, NEW
HARMONY

JAN 21 1954



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

VOLUME V

NUMBER 4

AN INDIANA VILLAGE

NEW HARMONY

BY

JOHN H. HOLLIDAY

INDIANAPOLIS
EDWARD J. HECKER, PRINTER
1914

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

VOLUME V

NUMBER 4

AN INDIANA VILLAGE

NEW HARMONY

BY

JOHN H. HOLLIDAY

INDIANAPOLIS
EDWARD J. HECKER, PRINTER
1914

BLACK GOLD

Allen County Public Library
900 Webster Street
PO Box 2270
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

NOTE

This article was written originally for the *Indianapolis Sentinel* after a visit I paid to New Harmony in July, 1869. Later it was revised, some additional facts being added and the whole brought down to 1881, when it was read as now presented to the Indianapolis Literary Club on April 4 of that year. The reader should bear this fact in mind.

J. H. H.

825711

AN INDIANA VILLAGE

NEW HARMONY

50 /
1
2
A few months since there passed away a prominent citizen of Indiana, who as one of a surveyor's party traveled all over the region known as the New Purchase when there were probably not a score of white families living within a radius of fifty miles of Indianapolis. Where there is now a flourishing city and a prosperous country, his eye had gazed upon an unbroken, trackless forest. It is hard to picture the marvelous change that had been wrought within the limits of his manhood. In no age has there been, and in no age can there ever again be such a wonderful development. The pioneer now has scarcely put a roof over his head before a railroad is at his heels, bringing with it the comforts of civilization, and following in its wake comes a stream of population that in a short time has subdued the forest or covered the prairie with continuous farms. Rapid moving and aggregations of population there may be, but they come armed with all the facilities of modern life, and are within easy communication not only of older settlements but of the whole world. Fifty years and more ago the pioneer coming to Indiana to carve out a home in the wilderness, turned his back upon the world and his life was one of hardship and privation. One of the early preachers, yet surviving, who came from central New York, has said that when he brought his wife away her friends bade her farewell forever, and now he can write to a daughter in Japan and receive an answer in less time than he then could to a point barely twenty-four hours distance from Indianapolis

by rail. When we consider what stupendous changes have taken place and remember that this wilderness of sixty years ago is now almost the center of population of the nation, it seems impossible that one man's life should have covered it all. Yet when Judge Test was carrying the surveyor's chain and establishing the metes and bounds of townships and sections that he probably never expected to see occupied, there was in Indiana a well-settled town which looked as if it might have been lifted up from the banks of the Rhine or the Neckar, like Aladdin's palace, and set down upon the lower Wabash. Quaint it would have seemed even to the eye of a traveled beholder, with its high houses of red brick and stone, with peaked roofs, odd architecture but massive construction; its frame dwellings with no front doors; its streets set out with large rows of shade trees; its uniformity of design and cleanliness; and its surroundings of well-cultivated fields and vineyards, encompassed with forest. But to the Indian who yet lingered in the vicinity, or the roving white man, it must have presented a strange appearance as he stood upon a neighboring hill and watched the smoke pouring from the factories and saw the busy laborers moving about. Very different it must have seemed from the straggling village in the woods made by the Americans, where nothing rose higher than the mud chimney of the log cabin, and where the stumps thick in the corn patches and the fresh rail fences marked the newness of the settlement and the resources of the settlers. Probably it was then as it certainly had been a few years before, the largest town in the State, but that distinction it soon lost. The flow of immigration passed it by and to-day it is not so large as it then was, simply a village, in size like many others, but in appearance and characteristics quite different. Its existence then was an anom-

aly, but it was due to the same causes that brought the Puritans to New England and the Huguenots to the Carolinas.

In 1757 there was born to a small farmer of Iptingen in Württemberg a son, who was called George Rapp. He received a common school education, worked with his father on the farm and in the winter was a weaver. At twenty-six he married. His life was like that of his class, but the man was no ordinary peasant. He was fond of reading and of thought. Religious feeling was much excited in the country during his early manhood, and Rapp, a devout believer, studied his Bible with the zeal characteristic of his race. He found in it a very different scheme of life from that in which he was placed. He was a literalist, and reached and surpassed the conclusions that literalists hold to-day. The lethargy of the established church was in sharp contrast with the activity of the Apostles. Christ might come at any moment, yet men were living as if there were no Christ. He longed for a return to the former things, for the close union of Christian fellowship intent only upon the eternal verities. He talked to others and found believers. At thirty he began to preach in his own house. His congregation, when it attracted notice, was denounced as separatists and persecuted by the clergy with the usual result. Yet there was nothing dangerous in their creed. Submission to the authorities was a principal tenet; all they asked was the right of private judgment and freedom to worship as they chose. Within six years three hundred families had become adherents of Rapp, and, after ten years of waiting, seeing no prospect of peace or toleration, they determined to go to America. In 1803 George Rapp, his son John and two others, having left the church in charge of Frederick Rapp, an adopted son, landed at Baltimore,

and, after prospecting in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio, bought five thousand acres of wild land in Butler county, Pennsylvania, twenty-five miles north of Pittsburgh. On July 4th, 1804, three hundred of the colonists landed at Baltimore, and six weeks later the same number at Philadelphia. There was still a remnant which, however, deserted the main body and settled in Lycoming county, Pennsylvania. The six hundred, made up of mechanics and peasants, but all thrifty, some having considerable property, were settled temporarily in Maryland and Pennsylvania, while a number went with Rapp to prepare their property for occupation, and in February, 1805, organized themselves into the Harmony Society, based upon the apostolic church and having all things in common. The rest, when they came, agreed to the plan, and with one hundred and twenty-five families began the community variously known as the Rappites, Harmonists and Economists, probably the most successful materially of all recorded schemes of voluntary association. This community was welded together by a profound faith, for which each member was ready to suffer persecution. They were headed by a man of strong, practical sense, indomitable perseverance, intense conviction and force. His assistant, Frederick Rapp, is described as "a man of uncommon ability and administrative talent." The members had the phlegmatic temperament and slow movement of the German peasant, with his constancy of purpose, animated by a supreme desire and controlled by a strong mind. There were no scoffers, no drones; cheerful obedience was given; each labored for the good of all. Harmony was built, factories were established to produce all that was needed, agriculture was carefully pursued, and stock breeding cultivated. The community was frugal and industrious, and flourished. The wilderness blos-

somed, comforts accumulated, children were born, and the members, happy in their present state, looked hopefully forward to the coming of the kingdom and a rest at the right hand of the Master. But a wave of religious feeling passed over the colonists, and George Rapp announced that to attain a purer life, to reach a higher sphere of which they had no conception, the carnal man must be crucified; in other words, celibacy must be practiced. In view of the second advent and the approaching resurrection, in which there was to be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, and in order that they might be numbered among the one hundred and forty-four thousand "who should stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and who were to be such as were not defiled with women, but were virgins," he urged his people to this further preparation and purification, and, always leading, put away his own wife and bade his son do likewise. He was obeyed by almost all his flock, and, under the enthusiasm of mistaken faith, God's arrangement of mankind into families was set aside, the husband and wife separating and living henceforth as strangers. The adoption of celibacy, in the belief that those who practiced it would receive the most perfect happiness in the next world, completed Rapp's system of theology, which embraced the tenets of orthodoxy, except that punishment was not eternal and that the second coming was at hand.

The Rappites, however, intent upon the things of the kingdom, were not averse to a comfortable life here and had a remarkably keen eye for the main chance. They found it difficult to get markets, and, getting into some disputes with their neighbors, decided to sell out, which they did at a sacrifice for \$100,000, and bought thirty thousand acres of land in what was then Gibson but is now Posey county, Indiana. As before, a party of pio-

neers went in advance, building houses and clearing ground. In 1814 the whole community came in broad-horns down the Ohio and up the Wabash to their second home, which they called New Harmony.

The village, situated on the higher land or second bottom, was laid out in squares forming four streets running north and south and six east and west. To these others have been added, but for many years the town preserved the same limits. How many Harmonists there were cannot be told. Accounts differ widely. At New Harmony it is said that more than one thousand went away, and there is no doubt that several hundred died there. When they left the town contained thirty-five brick, forty-five frame and about one hundred log houses, which must have required a population of about one thousand. Of the brick and frame buildings many are still standing, a few only having been burned or torn down, but they have been altered and improved in so many ways that the Harmonists, who had a queer notion that one door, and that a back one, was enough for any house, would not recognize them now. The most imposing edifice was the town hall, a huge cruciform structure measuring one hundred and twenty-five feet within the walls. For many years after the community days it was used as a pork-house, but some time ago was torn down, with the exception of a wing which the workingman's library occupies.

The "grainhouse," another large building, is still standing. It is built of stone to a height of twenty feet, and finished to an equal height with brick and surmounted with a high, rounding peaked roof. Its walls are very massive and the windows are barred with iron. It was built for a granary, the Harmonists said, and the walls were made thick to keep out the weevils, but the general

appearance, added to the fact that loopholes were pierced in it, lead one to believe that it was meant for a place of security should the community be attacked. When built there was no reason to dread the Indians, but the Germans had a wholesome fear of their backwoods neighbors who might have been induced to molest them. The granary was occupied for many years by Dr. David Dale Owen as a laboratory and museum, and afterward was used for a woolen factory and mill. Near by, on the corner, where Dr. David Owen's residence stands, was the home of George Rapp, afterward burned, and from this an underground passage to the grainhouse was found after the Harmonists had gone. Another of the buildings is fitted up as a theater and ballroom, and for many years has been a commodious public hall, in which not a few plays have been produced by home talent. Another very large building with a mansard roof, built for a boarding house, is used as a store, Odd Fellows' lodgeroom and printing office. Another one was the Viets house, long the hotel of the village, and a queer, quaint hostlery it was, with a jolly fat landlord such as we read about, but fire injured it many years ago and the jolly landlord is sleeping the last sleep in the neighboring graveyard. All of these buildings were put up with great care. The Harmonists did their work well.

Just west from the old town limits and not far from the river is an enclosure of several acres covered with a locust grove. This is the cemetery of the Harmonists. No stones or marks of any kind point out the graves, now undistinguishable. The ground is covered with grass, and, but for occasional ridges, one would think it never had been broken. Here awaiting the second coming of Christ, in anticipation of which they joyfully left home and country to cross the sea and settle in a strange land,

sleep several hundred of Rapp's followers. The mortality in the community was very great at first, and it is said the reason the graves were not marked was because Rapp thought it would have a bad effect both upon the people and strangers, to see how many had died. Here they lie, preserving in death the custom they observed in life, buried uniformly in rows. There are no family ties, no exalted places, nothing but equality; here at last is the true communism. They are not forgotten, however, by their friends at Economy, for the cemetery is well cared for at the expense of the community.

When the Rappites came to the Wabash the clearing of the country developed malarious diseases which made frightful havoc among them; it is believed that four or five hundred died during the ten years. When the worst was over the people became discouraged; possibly their faith was weakened, for the Messiah had not appeared; possibly Mr. Rapp thought they needed the stimulus of a removal and new settlement. After trying for several years to get a purchaser, the town and about two-thirds of the land was sold in 1824 to Robert Owen, of Scotland, for \$150,000. They returned to Pennsylvania, eighteen miles below Pittsburgh, building a town called Economy. Here they have prospered greatly, accumulating by enterprise and industry, as well as by fortunate investments, a large property, rumor says millions. George Rapp died here in 1847, ninety years old, but confident to the last that his mortal eyes would see the Master coming in power and glory. Few additions have been made and the community is small in numbers, less than two hundred. Their affairs have always been well managed, and there is a good deal of interest felt as to what will become of their property. It is believed that it will go to the State, but, curiously enough, there are a number of people in

Württemberg who, holding various degrees of relationship to members, hope to get a part and have brought suits to that end. Materially the Rappites' experiment has been a great success. They have lived well and accumulated a large average of wealth. But did it pay? Was the sacrifice of the individual profitable? The answer will be almost as varied as there are individuals. In his autobiography Robert Dale Owen says:

"When my father first reached the place, he found among the Germans—its sole inhabitants—indications of plenty and material comfort, but with scarcely a touch of fancy or ornament; the only exceptions being a few flowers in the gardens and what was called the Labyrinth, a pleasure ground laid out near the village with some taste, and intended—so my father was told—as an emblematic representation of the life these colonists had chosen. It contained small groves and gardens, with numerous circuitous walks enclosed by high beech hedges and bordered with flowering shrubbery, but arranged with such intricacy that without some Dædalus to furnish a clew, one might wander for hours and fail to reach a building erected in the center. This was a temple of rude material, but covered with vines of the grape and convolvulus, and its interior neatly fitted up and prettily furnished. Thus George Rapp had sought to shadow forth to his followers the difficulties of attaining a state of peace and social harmony. The perplexing approach, the rough exterior of the shrine and the elegance displayed within, were to serve as types of toil and suffering, succeeded by happy repose.

"The toil and suffering had left their mark, however, upon the grave, stolid and often sad German faces. They looked well fed, warmly clothed (my father told me) and seemed free from anxiety. The animal had been suffi-

ciently cared for ; and that is a good deal in a world where millions can hardly keep the wolf from the door, drudge as they will, and where hundreds of millions, manage as they may, live in daily uncertainty whether in the next week or month absolute penury may not fall to their lot. A shelter from life-wearing cares is something, but a temple typifies higher things, more than what we shall eat and what we shall drink and wherewithal we shall be clothed. Rapp's disciples had bought these too dearly—at an expense of heart and soul. They purchased them by unquestioning submission to an autocrat who had been commissioned—perhaps as he really believed, certainly as he alleged—by God himself. He bade them do this and that and they did it ; required them to say, as the disciples in Jerusalem said, that none of the things they possessed were their own, and they said it ; commanded them to forego wedded life and its incidents, and to this also they assented. Their experiment afforded conclusive proof that if a community of persons are willing to pay as high a price for abundant food, clothing, shelter and absolute freedom from pecuniary cares, they can readily obtain all this, working leisurely under a system of common labor, provided the dictator to whom they submit is a good business manager.”

Whether the Harmonists assumed any duties of citizenship I have not been able to discover, but it seems probable that they did, or at least in this State, as Frederick Rapp was a member of the convention that framed the first constitution, serving on several important committees. Subsequently he was a member of the Legislature and was one of the commissioners appointed to select a site for the State Capitol, a duty which he performed in 1820.

Robert Owen, by whom the second experiment in so-

cialism at New Harmony was made, was born in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, Wales, May 14, 1771. His parents were poor and he received little education, but being naturally a thoughtful, studious though not precocious boy, he read whatever he could lay hands upon and early formed opinions of his own, especially upon religious subjects. He himself says his doubts of the truth of religion began when he was ten. About that time he went to London to earn a living and thence to Manchester, where he drifted into cotton spinning at first, and before he was twenty as a superintendent, when he made great improvements in the business, and subsequently as an owner. He brought to his business intelligence, industry and good habits, and he succeeded. He seems to have been a model youth and man, pure minded, intent upon improvement, diligent in study and reflection. In Manchester in 1794 he lodged for some time in the same house with Robert Fulton and aided him with considerable money to prosecute various mechanical projects, but not that of the steamboat, then unthought of by the inventor. Here too he made acquaintance with and became a munificent supporter of Lancaster and Bell in their earlier efforts in education, and their views, according with theories already formed, took strong hold upon his mind. In all this he showed the trait of character which was to dominate his whole life, love to his fellow men, and which, after exhausting large accumulations, did not wane in advanced age and comparative obscurity. To the last he was hopeful and helpful and utterly unselfish. His theory of life briefly stated was that man is the creature of circumstances, or as we put it now, the victim of his environment. He is made by his surroundings, character being formed partly by nature at his birth and then by the external influences to which he is subjected. Such a thing

as moral responsibility did not exist, according to Mr. Owen. It is impossible within the limits of this sketch to give a comprehensive notice of this remarkable man or even a just estimate of his character and work. Suffice it to say that at New Lanark, a few miles from Glasgow, where he had become part owner of a large cotton mill in 1800, he put his theories of education and training into practice, and with marvellous success. The population was made much superior to that of other factory villages. order and virtue prevailed, all were schooled, especially the children, and happy homes of contentment built up. The fame of this village spread and it had visitors from all civilized countries, including royalty itself. Mr. Owen believed, and so did many others, that he had solved a great social problem and that from New Lanark was to radiate an influence that would transform modern society. Mr. Owen was convinced that his system could be applied as successfully to the world as to a factory village. He proposed to form communities, living in one immense building or village of union, built in a parallelogram, with common purses, food, enjoyment, resources and pursuits. The family arrangement was not interfered with, the adults he thought would be held together by a bond of self-interest, while the young were to be trained from infancy and built up in faith, so that coming to maturity the individuals having had the best surroundings would be free from human passions. Mr. Owen worked incessantly to promulgate his plans, at the same time championing education as the panacea for evil, and becoming the pioneer reformer of factory abuses. He was the advocate of everything that could help men, except religion. His views on this great subject he did not announce until 1817, when, after much preparation, he boldly declared them in an address in London. He evi-

dently expected momentous consequences, possibly martyrdom, but his conscience bade him speak and he spoke. The declaration seemed to create barely a ripple of surprise, but was none the less effective in injuring him. Such views in a country like England would at this day drive many away from one holding them, but it was far worse then. Owen was looked upon by most of the English people as the Delaware judge looked upon Bob Ingersoll—a blasphemer and an enemy of the country who should be crushed. He became obnoxious to a large class, his name was coupled with Paine's and Voltaire's, the good he had done was forgotten or belittled, and the good he would do was ignored and decried because he was an unbeliever. Nor has this impression passed away, and to many Englishmen the name of the factory reformer, the father of co-operative societies, the rugged, honest, unselfish man, the philanthropist in the best meaning of the word, only conveys the idea of an apostle of atheism and an enemy of all good. Not all his friends dropped away, however, and with some assistance a community experiment was tried in Scotland. This failed, because of bad management, for Mr. Owen, while a man of large general views, failed in the details of his experiments except at New Lanark. About this time he concluded that socialism could better be attempted in a new country where society was in more of a formative stage than in the old world, and, hearing of the desire of the Rappites to sell out, he came to this country, lectured in the principal cities, visited New Harmony, bought the property and announced that a community would be established there. There was no difficulty in finding adherents. Several hundred gathered there in the spring of 1825 when Mr. Owen made an opening address, suggesting the formation of a preliminary society as a sort of experimental

preparation for the community. In this the members were to live in families, receive credit for the work they did and draw all supplies from a common fund, which apparently was to be supplied by Mr. Owen. The government was to be done by a committee chosen by universal suffrage, and it was hoped that in two or three years, when the inharmonious characters had been weeded out, the asperities softened and the good qualities developed, the grand plan of brotherhood could be established. The constitution was saturated with philanthropy, and it is not a little amusing to find it excluded the blacks altogether, but afterward says: "Persons of color may be received as helpers to the society if found necessary, or if it be found useful, to enable them to become associates in communities in Africa or in some other country, or in part of this." Even in this elysium race-prejudice had full force. The society grew very rapidly, soon numbering over one thousand persons, and compelling notice that no more could be received until greater accommodations were provided. Schools taught by accomplished teachers were put into operation, labors of various kinds were pursued, and for a time there was a great deal of interest and enthusiasm, so much so that the next January it was thought the time had come for the organization of the real community. It may seem strange that so many people could have been gathered up in so short a time, but it must be remembered that great inducements were offered—comfortable homes, cultured society, good schools, small cost of living. There were a number of believers sincerely desirous of trying Mr. Owen's theory, there were some crackbrain enthusiasts ready for anything unusual and novel, but there were more who were actuated by purely selfish motives and who saw in his scheme a chance to better themselves

cheaply. To others it was doubtless a sort of picnic or grand frolic. And there were some sharpers keenly looking for spoils, who gave Mr. Owen a great deal of trouble before he was done with them. As the novelty wore off, disaffection broke out. At the end of the first year, however, Mr. Owen expressed great satisfaction, and after another year in which there had been a great deal of discord, he was equally sanguine of success, although in a few weeks the crisis came and his sons declared the community dead. Mr. Owen was not at New Harmony much of the time the community existed. He trusted others to carry out the details, but his presence would not have maintained it longer. There was no strong bond to hold the members together, no intense faith as with the Rappites, no confidence in any leader. The only tie was selfishness and that not of a high or enlightened type. Nearly fifty years after Robert Dale Owen, looking back after a long and busy life, said: "I do not believe that any industrial experiment can succeed which proposes equal remuneration to all men, the diligent and the dilatory, the skilled artisan and the common laborer, the genius and the drudge. I speak of the present age; what may happen in the distant future it is impossible to foresee and improvident to predict. What may be safely predicted is that a plan which remunerates all alike will, in the present conditions of society, eliminate from a co-operative association the skilled, efficient and industrious members, leaving an ineffective and sluggish residue, in whose hands the experiment will fail, both socially and pecuniarily."

Soon after the formation of the community Mr. Owen had sold half the land to William Maclure, the rest he had never conveyed to the society, and on its abandonment he offered land to those who wished to form small

agricultural communities. Several were established, leasing land at low rates, but the sharpers took advantage and secured a large amount of property from him. Subsequently he deeded all his interest in the property to his sons, who paid him an annuity of \$1,500 a year. The New Harmony experiment cost him about \$200,000, and the \$40,000 he had left was spent in the same way, a trading society or bazaar started in London taking a large part. Another socialistic experiment in England was as great a failure as that of New Harmony. He died in November, 1857, at his birthplace, to which an uncontrollable desire had taken him. Singularly enough, this man who all his days had refused to believe in the supernatural, became an ardent and most credulous spiritualist in his old age. But he was long forgotten outside of a small circle. William Lucas Sargeant, author of "Robert Owen and His Social Philosophy," says: "Owen lived so long that the remembrance of the good he accomplished was interred even before his bones. His proceedings during the last thirty or forty years had been so entirely apart from the ordinary current of affairs, that the man himself was forgotten. In 1857, at the great educational conference in London, when a feeble, white-haired man took an irregular place on the platform and tried to get a hearing for notions apparently quite beside or perhaps above the questions at issue, many persons hearing the name of the intruder, presumed that he must be the son of the notorious Robert Owen of their childhood."

"Men may come and men may go," but the influence of their actions goes on forever, and if Mr. Owen did not succeed, he left a rich legacy to the State and country. With the abandonment of the community, New Harmony simply assumed its place as an Indiana village. Many who had been attracted by the social movement went away,

but many remained, some of them the choicest spirits of the association. Among these were Mr. Owen's sons, Robert and William, who were soon joined by David and Richard. William came with his father on his first and Robert on his second visit to this country, and the latter was so charmed with America that before he had been on the soil twenty-four hours he had determined to live and die here and had taken the first step toward naturalization. He came by water from Pittsburgh in a keelboat which, from its valuable freight of talent and learning, was known to the community as "the boatload of knowledge." Among the passengers were William Maclure, Thomas Say, C. A. LeSeuer, a French naturalist, who partly made the voyage around the world with LaPérouse; Dr. Gerard Troost, afterward State geologist of Tennessee; Miss Lucy Sistaire, who became the wife of Thomas Say; Madam Fretageot, a French lady of great ability as a teacher, who took charge of the female schools, and whose descendants are now prominent citizens of New Harmony; Mr. William Phiquepol De Arusmont, a teacher who subsequently married Frances Wright; Stedman Whitwell, a noted London architect; Captain McDonald, a wealthy Scotchman who had been in the British army and who afterward inherited a title of nobility; Joseph Neef, the father of Mrs. Richard Owen, a coadjutor of Pestalozzi, who took charge of the boys' school and had conducted a school upon the Pestalozzian system at Schuylkill Falls, in which Admiral Farragut was a pupil; Oliver Evans, son of a noted machinist at Pittsburgh, and a number of others. These people and others of the more cultivated class were influenced to join the community by two reasons: a part, and the smaller, believed in socialistic theories and wished to try the experiment, but the larger part were fascinated

with the educational features proposed. The latter class was headed by William Maclure, and it was due to his personal influence that Say, LeSeuer, Neef, Madam Fretegeot and probably others came. William Maclure was a native of Ayr, Scotland, who engaged in business in London and New York at an early age, rapidly acquiring a fortune. Geology and natural history became the objects of his special study and he traveled all over Europe and most of this country in their pursuit. In 1809 he published a geological map of the United States which gave him the title of the father of American geology. He was regarded as almost the first of American scientists and was the chief founder of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, where he made his home, and for twenty-three years was its president, aiding it financially with large sums, and at his death leaving it his books and specimens. He early became an enthusiast in education, and in 1819 went to Spain to establish a great agricultural manual labor school for the lower classes, but just as his buildings were completed the Bourbon government was reestablished and he was driven out and his property, including ten thousand acres of land, confiscated. Returning to this country, he endeavored to carry out his scheme and finally attempted it at New Harmony, though not a believer in socialism. He gathered together these prominent teachers and scientists, and as has been said, purchased half the property from Mr. Owen. The failure of the community naturally injured his project of creating a great scientific center, but it might have come to something had not his health failed, compelling him to remove to Mexico. His property in New Harmony was retained for a number of years and Mr. Say made his home there, but when he died Mr. Maclure lost much of his interest in the place. The

Workingmen's Institute, if not his suggestion, was greatly aided by him with money and books, a large part of its library being his gift. Mr. Maclure died in Mexico in 1840, while on his way to this country. He was seventy-seven and had never married. A portion of his property was willed for the establishment of township libraries in this State and to some extent was used for that purpose. His friend, Mr. Say, a naturalist and the greatest entomologist of his day, was a native of Philadelphia, and one of the founders of the Academy of Natural Sciences. He was the chief zoologist in Long's expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1819, and accompanied other similar parties. He made New Harmony his home after going there, and there prepared his works on entomology and conchology, which are still regarded as standard. The illustrations of these in whole or part were executed in Paris but printed at New Harmony, as were two octavo volumes by Mr. Maclure, probably the finest work issued west of the Alleghanies up to that time. Mr. Say died in New Harmony in 1834, at the age of forty-seven. His grave was made in Mr. Maclure's garden, formerly Rapp's, and afterward owned by Dr. David Dale Owen and his sons. A monument erected by Mr. Maclure still marks the spot.

But time would fail to tell of many interesting residents of New Harmony, of the notorious but earnest and well-meaning Fanny Wright, of Neef and Whitwell and Evans and Price; of the eccentric Greenwood, father of Miles Greenwood, the Cincinnati manufacturer; of our own geologist Cox, whose parents were members of the community and upon whom the mantle of David Owen fell. But it is to the Owens that New Harmony owes most of its interest, and they have always been the most conspicuous residents of the place. Through them the

influence of Robert Owen, modified by culture and experience, has been made a force in the life of our State. So earnest an advocate of education as Robert Owen could not neglect to give his children the best opportunities and culture that money could buy, and his four sons, after receiving thorough home training, were sent to the celebrated school of Emanuel Von Fallenberg at Hofwyl, in Switzerland, of which Robert Dale Owen has given a charming sketch in his autobiography. Robert Dale and William, as has been said, came with their father to New Harmony and took part in the community, teaching and editing the weekly paper. The latter continued to live there until his death a few years later. David Dale, the third son, came to New Harmony with his brother Richard Dale in January, 1828. The former soon returned to Europe to study geology and natural science, but returned to this country to take up his residence in 1833. Two years later he was selected by the Legislature to make a geological survey of Indiana; subsequently he made an examination of the mineral lands of Iowa, and in 1848 was appointed United States Geologist, conducting the survey of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Kentucky. In 1857 he was appointed State Geologist of Arkansas and in his work there was assisted by his pupil, Professor Cox. His death was hastened by the exposure in the miasmatic regions of that State, and he died in New Harmony in 1860, aged fifty-seven years, and enjoying the reputation of being in the front rank of his profession. His collection, which was a remarkably complete one, was purchased by the State some years ago at a cost of \$2000 and is now at Bloomington. For a time he occupied the old "granary" as a museum and laboratory, but just before his death had completed a handsome building for that special use, which has since been con-

verted into a dwelling house and is occupied by one of his sons.

Richard Owen, the youngest and only surviving son, was also a geologist, being at one time State Geologist of Indiana. He lived for some years in Tennessee. During the Civil War he was the colonel of an Indiana regiment, and then became professor at Bloomington, a place he relinquished two years ago, returning to New Harmony, where he is now enjoying a calm and pleasant old age, after a well spent life.

The most celebrated of the sons was Robert Dale Owen, the eldest. Like his father, the animating principle of his life was humanity. Bred to his father's peculiar views, he remained for a time in subjection to their influence, but age and experience emancipated him to a great extent, and after trying another communistic experiment near Memphis with Fanny Wright, he seems to have abandoned all belief in socialism. He launched into literature early, publishing at New Harmony in 1825 or '26 a work called "New Views of Society." Subsequently he wrote a play called "Pocahontas," which was acted by the Thespian Society about 1840. His association with Fanny Wright and his lectures and discussions had given him considerable prominence when he went into politics as a VanBuren elector in 1840, and his speeches in that canvass are still remembered as having been remarkable for their strength of argument and the absence of personalities and appeals to prejudices. In 1843 he was elected to Congress and again in 1845, but was beaten in 1847. During his service he was made a regent of the Smithsonian Institute, then just begun, and was particularly active in its foundation. The building it occupies is said to be due to his theories of architecture. In 1849 he was a candidate for United States Senator but

was beaten by Governor Whitcomb. In 1850 he became a member of the constitutional convention and was beyond all comparison the most laborious, fertile and efficient man of the one hundred and fifty. The law reforms and the provisions for women's rights and free schools were especially his work, and leave upon our statute book the ineffaceable marks of his father's inculcations, modified or strengthened by his own talent and observation. He was appointed by President Pierce charge d'affaires to Naples and lived there until 1858. It was during this period that he became like his father, a convert to spiritualism, and with his characteristic industry devoted his labors to the investigation of supernatural existences or apparitions. From the first avowal of spiritualistic notions or tendencies until his death, he led the numerous hosts of the new faith with undisputed authority. Into the work of propagating, defending and expurgating spiritism, he put the remainder of his life. He attended spiritual conventions all over the country, shaped the doctrines, explained the phenomena and defended the honesty of the new faith, and really converted it from a loose assemblage of notions into a system and a religion. His works, "Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World" and the "Debatable Land," were widely read and discussed, the appearance of the first causing a literary sensation. He wrote and lectured a great deal upon public topics all his later years, producing a novel, "Beyond the Breakers," which was printed in Lippincott's Magazine in 1869, and autobiographical sketches in the Atlantic in 1873. During the war he was a most ardent unionist, abandoning the democracy wholly, and rendered valuable service in various ways, from defending the Union cause with tongue and pen to purchasing arms in Europe. He was a very homely man, of medium height,

a little stooped; his face of the Scotch type, strongly marked and irregular in feature, but singularly genial and kind in expression. His manner was extremely courteous, unaffected and conciliating. An interview in 1869 gave me the impression that the community experiment was a distasteful subject with him, for he was extremely reticent and politely evaded or tried to evade all questions on that topic, though talking freely about everything else. But his autobiographical sketches show no reticence, their frankness of statement and fullness of detail about personal matters and feelings reminding one of Rousseau's "Confessions," though lacking the apparent vanity of the Frenchman. Before his death, which took place June 24, 1877, his mind was deranged by overwork, deranged but not obscured, for during several months' residence in the hospital for the insane his mental powers were incessantly active and brilliant, though twisted into grotesque shapes. Happily he recovered mental soundness but did not long survive, dying at the ripe age of seventy-three. What was said of him at the time in *The Indianapolis News* seems to me to hold good still:

"In scholarship, general attainments, varied achievements; as author, statesman, politician, and leader of a new religious faith, he was unquestionably the most prominent man Indiana ever owned. Others may fill now, or may have filled a larger space in public curiosity or interest for a time; but no other Hoosier was ever so widely known or so likely to do the State credit by being known, and no other has ever before held so prominent a place so long with a history so unspotted with selfishness, duplicity or injustice."

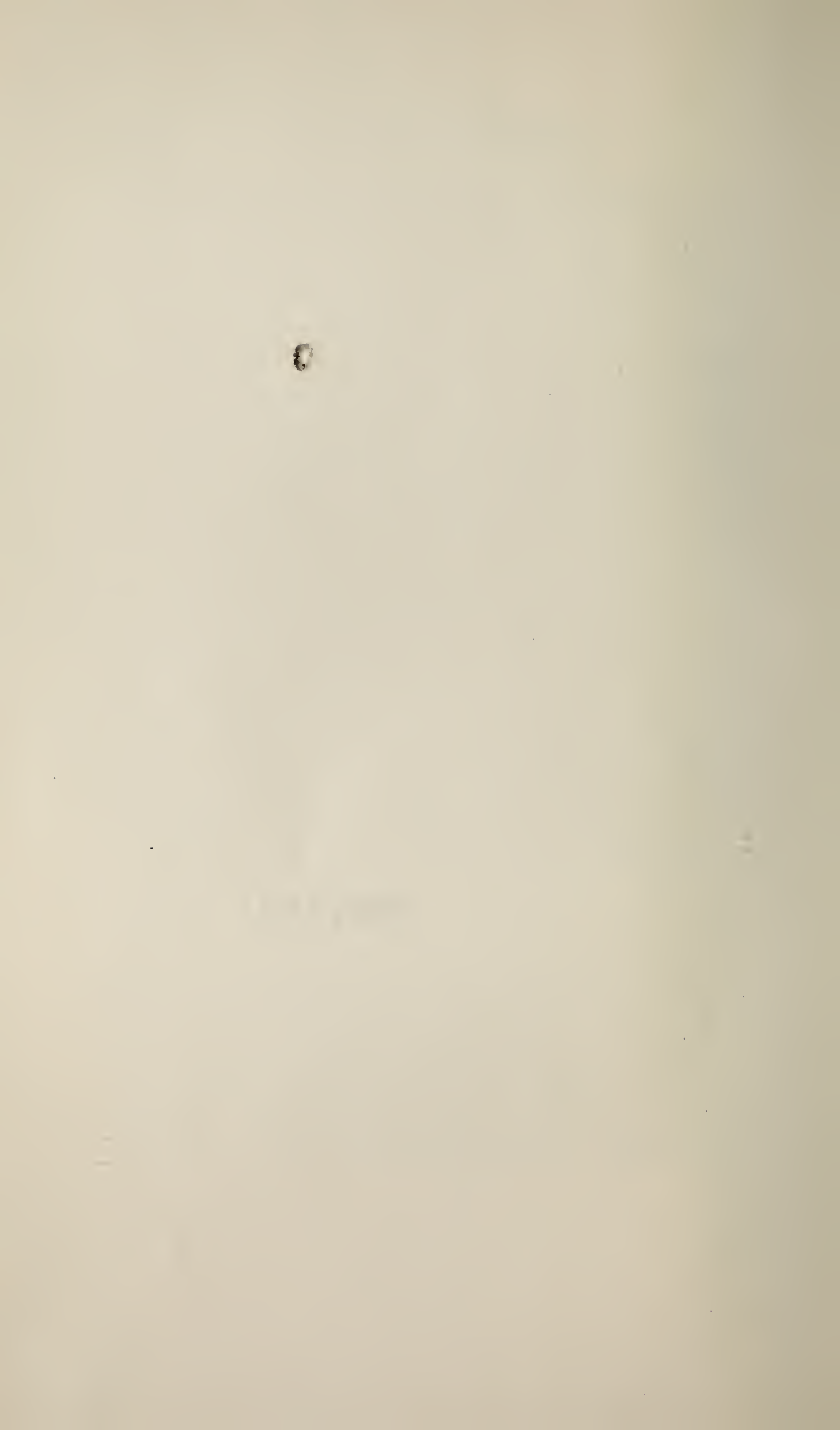
The Owens are well represented in New Harmony in the third and fourth generations, but the tastes of the

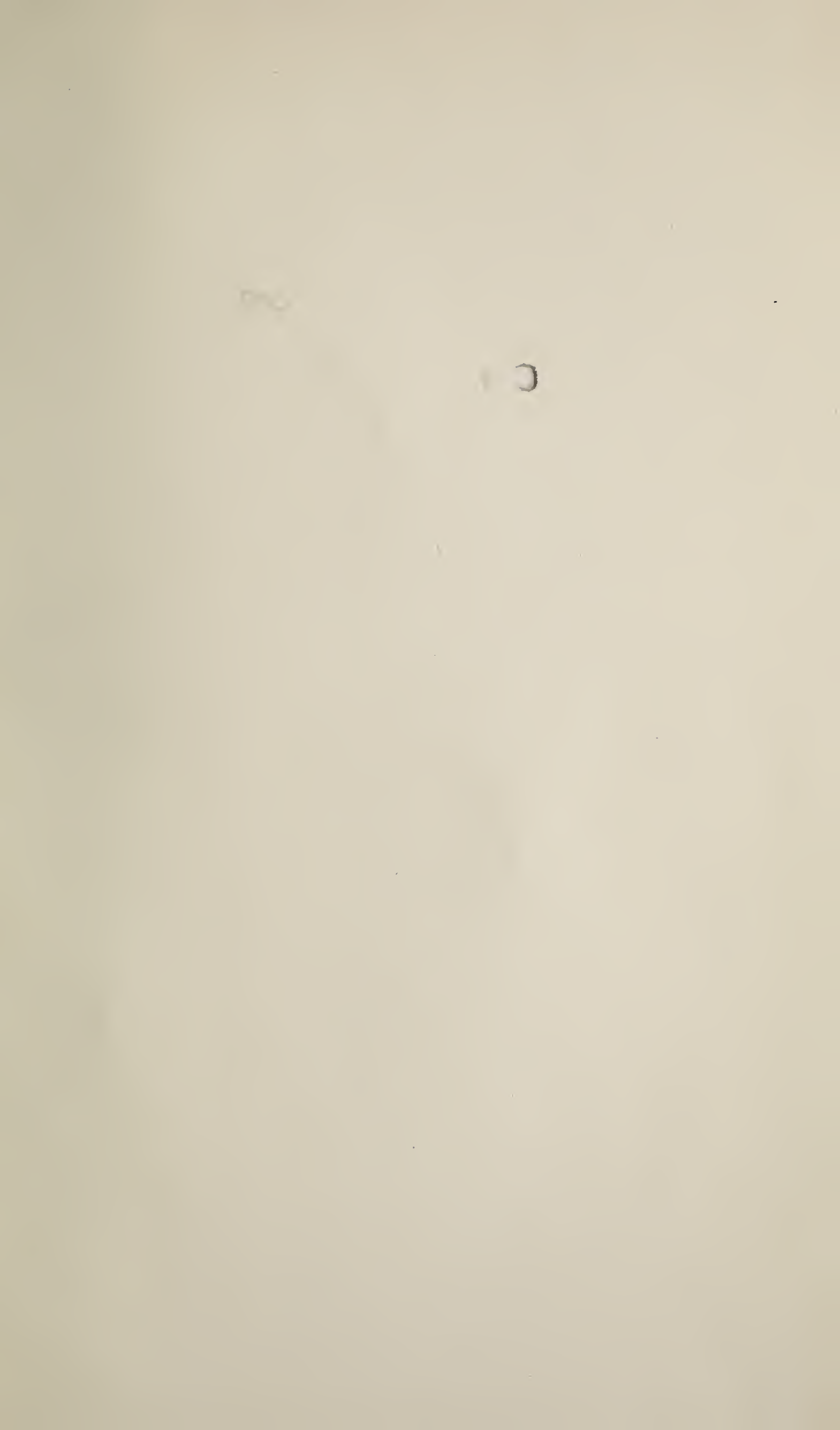
grandsons of Robert Owen seem to run to business rather than to natural or social science.

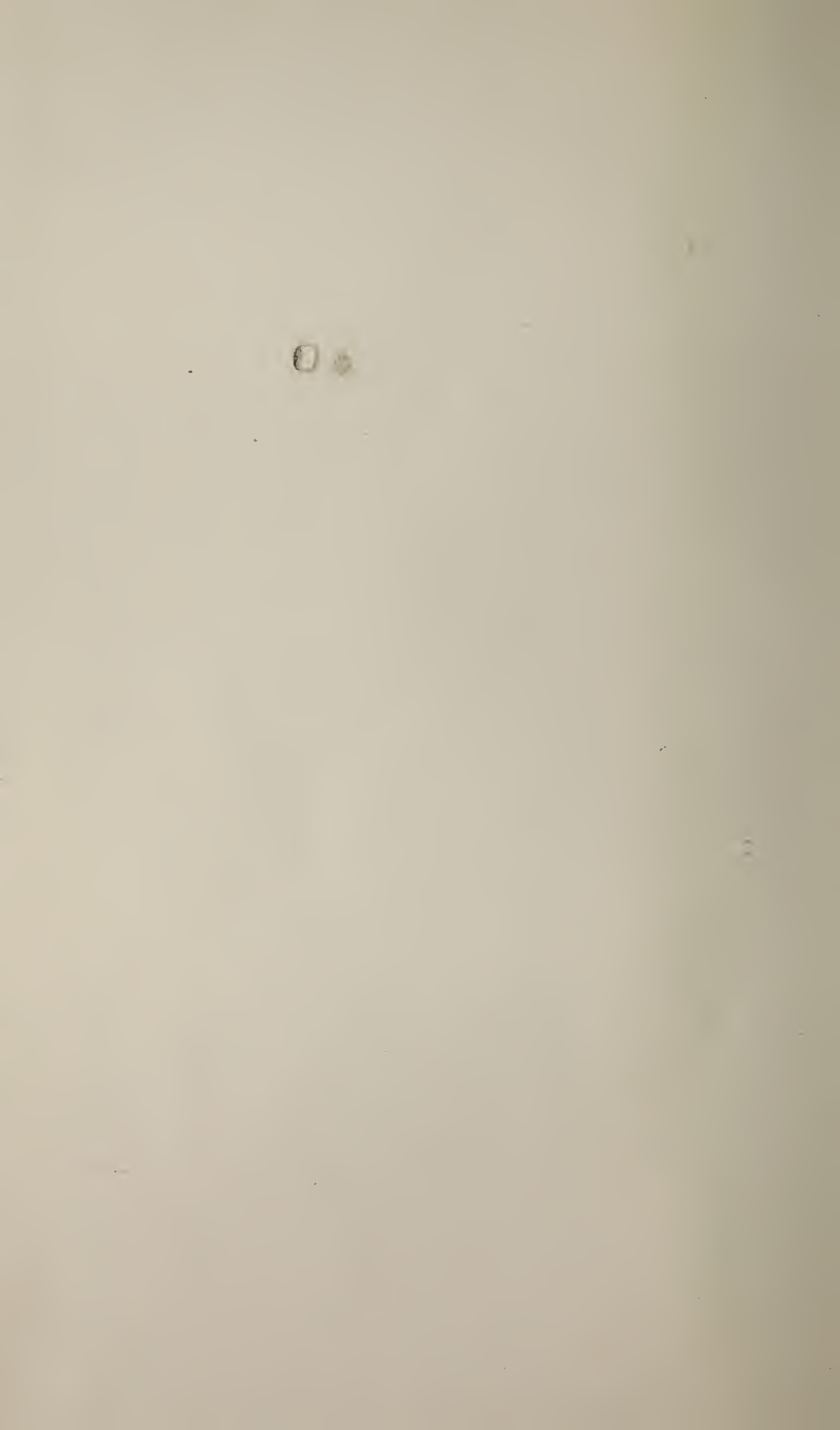
The character of a place is with rare exceptions stamped ineffaceably by its founders. New Harmony is not an exception. It is more than sixty years since the community died, but its democracy is still potent. There is no aristocracy, no higher and lower class. The people move on the same plane, the individual is judged more by his merits than in most places. There is much general intelligence, much love of books and amusements. The learned men who lived here often gave lectures and fostered a love for literature and science. Dr. Owen's collection was an educator. The Workingmen's Institute, founded over forty years ago, has a library of nearly four thousand volumes, which is well patronized. Certainly no other village in Indiana possesses such a collection of books. Adjoining the library is the room of the Society for Mutual Instruction, devoted to scientific and literary exercises. It was organized by Professor Richard Owen after his return from Bloomington, and he gave it as a nucleus a considerable cabinet of minerals, fossils, etc. Music has been cultivated ever since the days of the community, which paid particular attention to it, having as a teacher Josiah Warren, who afterward tried to alter the method of writing music. The New Harmony band is one of the institutions. There is less of the provincial about the people than one would expect. The free thinking tendency in religious matters is almost as strongly developed as old Robert Owen could have wished. Probably no community in the State of equal numbers has so few church members. There are but two church organizations, one Episcopalian and a Methodist. Services are kept up statedly in the latter, but it is very feeble, the support given it not being enough

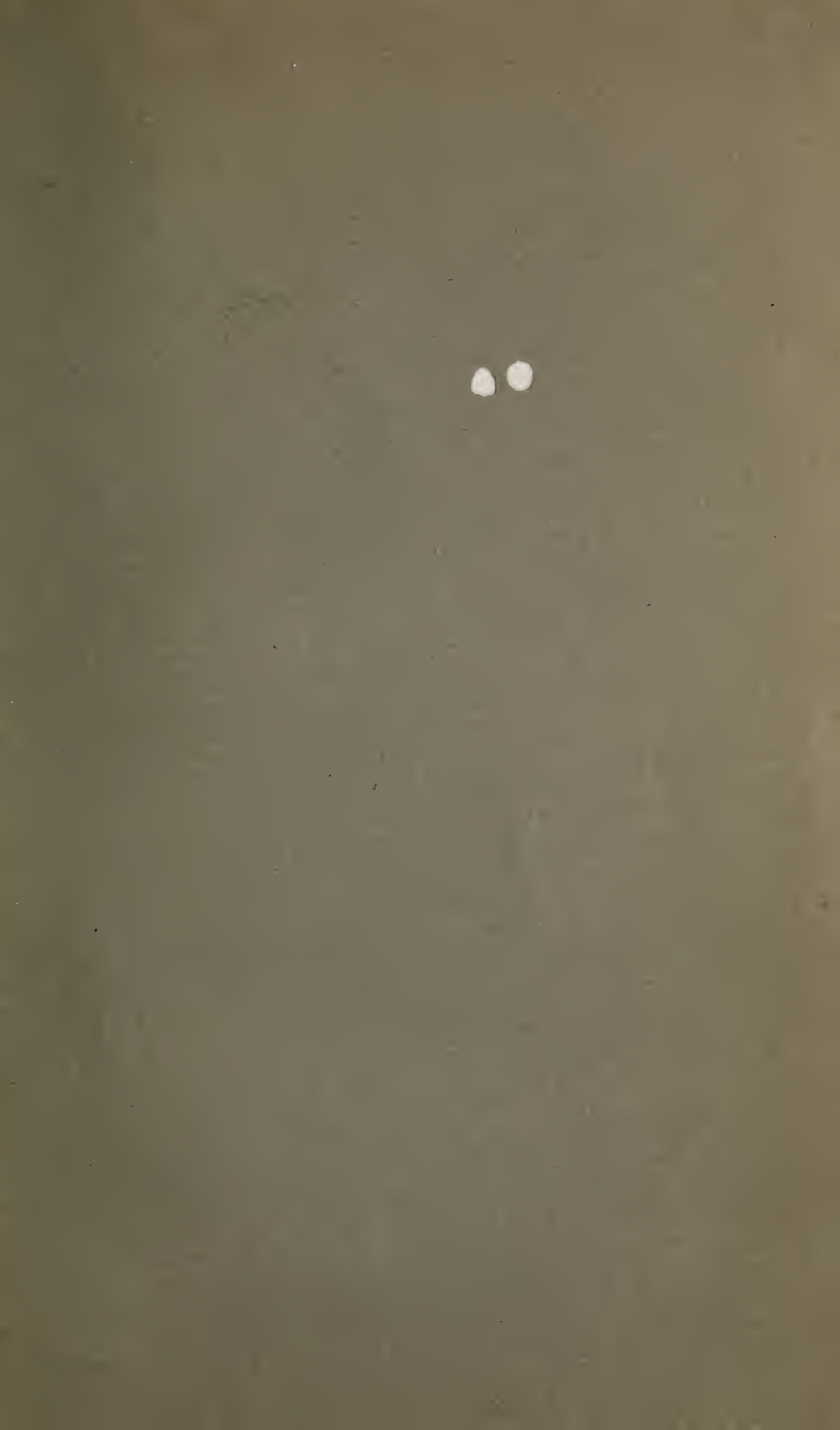
to bring a man whose talent would arouse the interest of the people. The Episcopal Church has not had a rector for twenty years. Services are held occasionally, the Bishop goes there once a year, but the number upon the church rolls, fourteen, has not changed in several years. The majority of the members belong to the Owen family, which is a fact worth noting as showing how the pendulum has swung back. Professor Richard Owen is a Presbyterian, having been an elder in that church at Bloomington. The population is about one thousand. The village is slowgoing and conservative in comparison with most of our towns. Comparatively isolated as it has always been by not being on any direct line of travel, it has retained many old-fashioned notions and customs, and there is a freedom and restfulness about its existence that is fascinating when contrasted with the hurry and bustle of city life. For years it was miles away from the railroad and the telegraph, but at last these arms of modern life have grasped it, and, while their coming has wrought some change and in time may create greater ones, they cannot efface the marks of the past, for it is still in many things as anomalous as in the Community days and deserving par excellence the title of "*The Indiana Village*."

825711









Indiana Historical Society Publications

CONTENTS OF VOL. I

- No. 1. PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY, 1830-1886.
No. 2. NORTHWEST TERRITORY.
Letter of Nathan Dane concerning the Ordinance of 1787.
Governor Patrick Henry's Secret Letter of Instruction to George Rogers Clark.
No. 3. THE USES OF HISTORY. By President Andrew Wyllie, D. D.
No. 4. THE NATIONAL DECLINE OF THE MIAMI INDIANS. By John B. Dillon.
No. 5. EARLY HISTORY OF INDIANAPOLIS AND CENTRAL INDIANA. By Nathaniel Bolton.
No. 6. JOSEPH G. MARSHALL. By Prof. John L. Campbell.
No. 7. JUDGE JOHN LAW. By Charles Denby.
No. 8. ARCHAEOLOGY OF INDIANA. By Prof. E. T. Cox.

APPENDIX.

- No. 9. THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE MIAMI COUNTRY. By Dr. Ezra Ferris.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II

- No. 1. THE LAWS AND COURTS OF NORTHWEST AND INDIANA TERRITORIES. By Daniel Wait Howe.
No. 2. THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF JOHN B. DILLON. By Gen. John Coburn and Judge Horace P. Biddle.
No. 3. THE ACQUISITION OF LOUISIANA. By Judge Thomas M. Cooley.
No. 4. LOUGHERY'S DEFEAT AND PIGEON ROOST MASSACRE. By Charles Martindale.
No. 5. A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE TERRITORY AND STATE OF INDIANA FROM 1800 to 1890. By Daniel Wait Howe.
No. 6. THE RANK OF CHARLES OSBORN AS AN ANTI-SLAVERY PIONEER. By George W. Julian.
No. 7. THE MAN IN HISTORY. By John Clark Ridpath.
No. 8. OUIATANON. By Oscar J. Craig.
No. 9. REMINISCENCES OF A JOURNEY TO INDIANAPOLIS IN 1836. By C. P. Ferguson.
No. 10. LIFE OF ZIBA FOOTE. By Samuel Morrison.
"OLD SETTLERS." By Robert P. Duncan.
No. 11. FRENCH SETTLEMENTS ON THE WABASH. By Jacob Piatt Dunn.
No. 12. SLAVERY PETITIONS AND PAPERS. By Jacob Piatt Dunn.

CONTENTS OF VOL. III

- No. 1. A HISTORY OF EARLY INDIANAPOLIS MASONRY AND OF CENTER LODGE. By Will E. English.
No. 2. SIEUR DE VINCENNES, THE FOUNDER OF INDIANA'S OLDEST TOWN. By Edmond Mallet.
No. 3. THE EXECUTIVE JOURNAL OF INDIANA TERRITORY. Edited and annotated by William Wesley Woollen, Daniel Wait Howe, and Jacob Piatt Dunn.
No. 4. THE MISSION TO THE OUABACHE. By Jacob Piatt Dunn, pp. 78.
No. 5. FIFTY YEARS IN PHARMACY. By George W. Sloan, pp. 27.
No. 6. CALEB MILLS. By Chas. W. Moores, pp. 280.

CONTENTS OF VOL. IV.

- No. 1. DIARY OF WM. OWEN. Edited by Joel W. Hiatt.
No. 2. THE WORD "HOOSIER." By Jacob Piatt Dunn.
JOHN FINLEY. By Mrs. Sarah A. Wrigley.
No. 3. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON'S ADMINISTRATION OF INDIANA TERRITORY. By Homer J. Webster, A. M., Ph. M.
No. 4. MAKING A CAPITAL IN THE WILDERNESS. By Daniel Wait Howe.
No. 5. NAMES OF PERSONS ENUMERATED IN MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, AT THE FIFTH CENSUS, 1830.
No. 6. SOME ELEMENTS OF INDIANA'S POPULATION; OR ROADS WEST, AND THEIR EARLY TRAVELERS. By W. E. Henry.
No. 7. LOCKERBIE'S ASSESSMENT LIST OF INDIANAPOLIS, 1835. Edited by Eliza G. Browning.
No. 8. THE SCOTCH-IRISH PRESBYTERIANS IN MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA. By James Albert Woodburn.
No. 9. INDIANAPOLIS AND THE CIVIL WAR. By John H. Holliday.

CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

- No. 1. LINCOLN'S BODY GUARD, WITH SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Robert McBride.
No. 2. INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS IN EARLY INDIANA. By Logan Esarey.
No. 3. THE SULTANA DISASTER. By Joseph Taylor Elliott.

Uniform volumes, 8vo cloth, uncut, with continuous paging and complete index. The earlier numbers have been reset in the same style as the later ones and the volumes are now uniform throughout.

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

Publishers for the Society

INDIANAPOLIS

19-1484

